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SOURCE Vishwamitra.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

INDIA'S KANDLA-GANDHIDHAM-DEESA RAILWAY COMPLETED

*Comment and Summary:* Kandla, located in Kutch State, on the west coast of India, is being developed as a seaport by the Indian government to offset the loss of Karachi to Pakistan.

Construction of the railway from Deesa to Kandla, via Gandhidham, was begun in 1950 to develop the economic resources of the northwest and to ease the heavy shipping traffic in Bombay. Gandhidham, named after Mahatma Gandhi, is located about 7 miles from Kandla. It is a newly planned city for the workers of the seaport.

Ceremonies for the opening of the railway were held on 2 October 1952 in Gandhidham to commemorate the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. Principal speakers on that occasion included Dr Rajendra Prasad, President of India, and Lal Bahadur Shastri, Minister of Railways and Transport, Government of India.

The following information was taken from the Hindi daily newspaper Vishwamitra, Bombay. It indicates the salient points emphasized in the speech delivered by Shastri, who described the physical features and the significance of the railway in connection with the development of the economy of this area.]

Gandhidham, 3 October -- The geography of Kutch has kept the state isolated from the rest of India for many years. It is bounded on the north and the east by the Rann of Kutch and on the south by the Arabian Sea. It was further isolated because the Kutch narrow-gauge railway, the only railway system in the state, is not connected with any other railway line. The railway, which was constructed in 1905, is only 72 miles long and runs between Bhuj, Kandla, Tuna, and Machau.

Plans to extend the railway from Deesa in Rajasthan were considered as soon as the government decided to develop the port of Kandla. The line from Deesa to Kandla, of meter gauge, is 170 miles long. Of this, 94 miles are in Bombay State and the remainder in Kutch. There are 15 large bridges along the route, the longest being situated over the Banas River, 2 miles from Deesa. This bridge is constructed of fourteen 80-foot girders.

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The government has decided to operate diesel locomotives on this route for economy reasons. Diesel oil for the trains will be supplied from huge storage tanks at the port of Kandla. Steam locomotives will not be used, because the water supply along the route has been found to be brackish and injurious to locomotive boilers.

The new line will connect Kashmir, Rajasthan, Madhya Bharat, southern Punjab, and Delhi with the port of Kandla. It will also make available to the rest of the country such natural resources as gypsum, lignite, coal, soapstone, iron, kaolin, salt, etc., which are found in Kutch State.

The government intends to construct additional lines for the future development of Kutch. These will include the extension of the 44-mile-long Mildi-Raniwar line, the construction of a broad-gauge line to Kandla, and the conversion of the present Kutch narrow-gauge railway into a meter-gauge line.

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